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CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION **ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2012** **INFORMATION SHEET AND APPLICATION FORM**

This information sheet and application form is for those who are planning to volunteer as helpers on the 2012 Catholic Association (CA) pilgrimage to Lourdes on **24-31 August 2012**.

This form is for most volunteer helpers. However, if you are a qualified **doctor** or qualified UK registered **nurse** and wish to volunteer, or if you are **aged 17-25** and would like to join the Young Helpers' Group, please contact:

DOCTORS	NURSES	YOUNG HELPERS' GROUP
Dr Adam Farmer Chief Doctor 14 The Garthlands Scholar's Gate Stafford ST17 9ZP chief_doctor@catholicassociation.co.uk	Miss Rachel Easton Chief Nurse 47 Clingan Road Bournemouth Dorset BH6 5PZ chief_nurse@catholicassociation.co.uk	Mr & Mrs David & Judy Ball 8 Farrow Road Norwich NR5 8AH young_helpers@catholicassociation.co.uk

Background information

The CA pilgrimage to Lourdes is made up of pilgrims from the Dioceses of Clifton, East Anglia, Northampton, Portsmouth and Southwark, as well as those from Stonyhurst College and the British Province of Carmelites. The CA Pilgrimage co-ordinates all volunteer helpers centrally.

There are usually about 150 adults who come on the CA's pilgrimage who need care or assistance: our **Assisted Pilgrims**, or APs. Some APs, if accompanied by a relative, spouse or carer, choose to stay in a hotel in Lourdes and receive basic support from **volunteer helpers**. This usually takes the form of wheelchair assistance moving about the town and to services. Many of our APs, however, stay in the **Accueil**, a residential facility where APs receive full-time care from volunteer helpers who work in teams.

Each AP staying in the Accueil has different needs and the support each AP receives from volunteer helpers therefore varies from straightforward companionship to full assistance with washing and dressing. Any medical and specialised physical care needed by the APs is provided by the qualified doctors and nurses who form an integral part of our pilgrimage, but the majority of our volunteer helpers are not medical professionals. We have some volunteer helpers who come on the CA pilgrimage year after year, but we have other volunteer helpers who are on their first pilgrimage. **All are welcome** and all have an important contribution to make to the community that we form during our pilgrimage week.

Anyone aged 17 and over may volunteer as a helper, subject to suitable references being received and the successful completion of the relevant CRB checks. There is a range of duties volunteer helpers undertake which enables people of all ages, capabilities and experience to volunteer and we are always looking for new volunteer helpers. There are limited **childcare arrangements** in place for the children of volunteer helpers: please see the notes below.

The work volunteer helpers undertake generally falls into the following categories:

- **Rolling** - helping people to move from the Accueil or hotels to the services of the pilgrimage or to shops, cafes etc. Usually this involves pushing wheelchairs.
- **Accueil Care** - assisting the nurses with the care of the guests in the Accueil e.g. helping them to wash and dress, making beds, cleaning their rooms and bathrooms and providing companionship.
- **Other Accueil duties** – which include helping in the Dining Room (although not cooking) and the vital job of ensuring that there is a steady supply of tea and coffee.
- **Ceremonies and Marshalling** - directing processions and working in each of the services. Those who undertake this duty are usually very experienced helpers who know Lourdes well, but all welcome.
- **Piscines** – recommended for experienced volunteer helpers only. This may be combined part-time with other duties in some circumstances.
- **Music Group** – it is possible to combine this with other duties.
- **HCP** – working with the Helpers' Children's Programme. They have preference for people who have come with the CA as a helper at least once before and who have experience of childcare/teaching/youth groups.

Male volunteer helpers are called *brancardiers* (meaning *stretcher-bearers*) and the **female volunteer helpers are called *handmaids***. Most volunteer helpers will work in mixed teams of handmaids and brancardiers undertaking a combination of Accueil Care and Rolling duties and we recommend that first time volunteer helpers select this as their preferred duty, as it gives the best overview of the work that is undertaken in Lourdes.

Most volunteer helpers travel and book their accommodation via Tangney Tours, but some choose to travel and book their accommodation independently. Please note that we need as many helpers (particularly experienced helpers) as possible on the main Tangney pilgrimage flights, as this is how the majority of our APs travel. The pilgrimage starts as soon as we take over the responsibility for their care and well-being at the airport, so please do consider whether you may be able to travel with the main pilgrimage flight. The CA may be able to offer limited financial assistance to some appropriate experienced helpers, so please do contact either Matt or Anna if you would like to discuss this further.

If you are travelling or booking your accommodation independently, please remember that you need to send us a **cheque for the CA levy in the sum of £25** with your application form to enable us to process your application. Those travelling with Tangney Tours will have this levy included automatically into the cost of their booking and do not need to send us an additional cheque. If you are a family unit and travelling independently, please send us a cheque for the CA levy in the sum of £50 with your application form.

To volunteer as a brancardier or handmaid, please complete the attached form and send it as soon as possible and by no later than 1 June 2012 to:

Mr Matt Betts
Chief Brancardier
26 Rivets Close
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 8JP

The information that you give us on the application form will allow us to allocate to you the most appropriate duty, but we encourage you to express your preference for the sort of work you would like to do and to specify if you would prefer a limited time commitment. Please also consider your own well-being before volunteering: the Lourdes pilgrimage week is hugely enjoyable, but can also be very tiring and it may be that you enjoy the experience more if you do not have a formal duty.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACCEPT YOUR APPLICATION IF IT IS RECEIVED AFTER 1 JUNE 2012.

Preparation sessions and evening social

London Prep Day

These will be taking place for both experienced and new helpers on **Saturday 23 June 2012 in the parish hall of English Martyrs Church, 142 Rodney Road, Walworth, London, SE17 1RA**. Please put this date in your diaries now.

It is compulsory for ALL new volunteer helpers to attend the morning session, which will run from 10.30am - 1.30pm. The session will provide information about the work involved and the wider pilgrimage and enable you to meet other helpers and organisers. We also try to complete CRB application forms at this time. A small buffet is kindly provided by the parishioners after the morning session, so you can have a chance to ask further questions and fill in your CRB application forms.

The session for experienced helpers will take place from 2.30pm – 5.30pm. We ask that as many of you as possible come to this, though we will be asking a few of you to help run the morning session for new helpers, so please watch out for an invitation.

Please then join us from 6pm in the evening to meet each other and catch up informally over some inexpensive refreshments.

Stonyhurst Prep Day

For the second time, we will also be organising a preparation day at Stonyhurst College for its pupils and for those volunteer helpers in the north of England, both new and returning. This will be taking place on **Saturday 26 May 2012** (*please note this is a change of date*). We invite all experienced and new helpers to attend the preparation day together. The preparation day starts in the morning and finishes in the afternoon. The Stonyhurst Pilgrimage Trust kindly provides lunch for all attendees. Please indicate on the application form should you prefer to attend this day.

Notes:

1. If you **want to volunteer as a full-time singer/musician**, please contact the Director of Music: Mrs Judy Ball, 8 Farrow Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8AH or on j.ball@catholicassociation.co.uk.

2. If you are volunteering as a helper and bringing children (aged 0-16) with you to Lourdes and would like them to be part of the **Helpers' Children's Programme (HCP)**, a childcare programme staffed by volunteers with appropriate qualifications, please complete this form to volunteer as a helper **and** also contact the HCP co-ordinators directly: Catholic Association HCP, 5 Kingslee Court, 17 Worcester Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 6PH. Email: hcp@catholicassociation.co.uk. Telephone: 020 8770 0214. **N.B. Families must be registered with the Helpers' Children's Programme by 1 June 2012.**